

54. Anti-Bullying Policy

Definition of bullying: Bullying is behaviour that hurts someone else - such as name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone.

Purpose of policy: The purpose of NTC's anti-bullying policy is to prevent bullying from happening within the organisation, as much as possible. When bullying does happen, NTC will make sure it is stopped as soon as possible and that those involved receive the support they need. In addition, NTC will provide information to all staff, children and their families about what needs to be done to prevent and deal with bullying. Bullying causes real distress. It can affect a person's health and development and, at the extreme, can cause significant harm. People are often targeted by bullies because they appear different from others. NTC acknowledges that everyone has a role to play in preventing bullying and putting a stop to bullying.

NTC will seek to prevent bullying by:

1. Developing a code of behaviour that sets out the "dos" and "don'ts" in terms of how everyone involved in NTC is expected to behave, both in face-to-face contact and online. This Code of Behaviour can be found in this Safeguarding Handbook.
2. Developing a new members' Welcome Policy that will help NTC to attract members from diverse groups.
3. Developing a plan that describes how we welcome new members and help them to settle in.
4. Holding regular discussions with NTC's staff members, volunteers, children and families who use NTC, to ensure that they understand NTC's Anti-Bullying Policy. **These discussions will focus on:**
 - a. Group members' responsibilities to look after one another and uphold the behaviour codes.
 - b. Practising skills such as listening to each other.
 - c. Respecting the fact that we are all different.
 - d. Making sure that no one is without friends.
 - e. Dealing with problems in a positive way.
 - f. Checking that the anti-bullying measures are working well.
5. Developing a Complaints Policy and Procedure. This policy and procedures can be found in NTC's **Complaints Policy, Complaints Procedure and Complaints Procedure Flowchart** in the Introduction section of this Safeguarding Handbook.
6. Making sure that NTC staff, children, as well as parents and carers have clear information about our anti-bullying policy, complaints procedure, code of behaviour and anti-bullying procedure

When bullying occurs NTC will respond to it by:

1. Having a clear anti-bullying procedure in place.
2. Providing support and training for all NTC staff on dealing with all forms of bullying, including racial, sexist, homophobic and sexual bullying.
3. Addressing the issue from the point of view of the person being bullied, the bully, any bystanders and NTC as a whole.
4. Reviewing the plan developed to address the bullying, in order to ensure that the problem has been resolved.
5. Avoiding any punishments that make the individuals concerned seem small, or look or feel foolish in front of others.

Reviewed & Updated: March 2018

NTC will review this **Anti-Bullying Policy** and best practice at least annually. In addition, more frequent reviews will be undertaken following any major safeguarding incident, incident learning outcomes, organisational changes, as well as changes to legislation.

55. Anti-Bullying Procedure

Definition of bullying: Bullying is behaviour that hurts someone else - such as name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone.

Purpose & aim of procedure: This procedure is supported by the NTC anti-bullying policy. **Its aim is to:**

- Provide detailed guidance to NTC staff members, as well as to children who may experience bullying, so that they will know what to do if an incident of bullying occurs between children.
- To ensure that NTC responds fairly and consistently to incidents of bullying, recognising that those who bully often have needs too.

Who does the procedure apply to: This procedure applies to all children who attend NTC and who may be bullied; behave in a bullying way towards others; or observe someone being bullied. It also applies to all NTC staff members who observe bullying between children within NTC and who may have incidents of bullying reported to them - or who may be concerned that a child at NTC is showing signs of being bullied.

If a child is bullying another child - to the extent that it may cause significant harm - then this must be dealt with using NTC's Peer on Peer Abuse Policy and Procedures.

This anti-bullying procedures do not cover incidents of bullying among NTC staff members and/or volunteers. In these circumstances, NTC staff members should use the Grievance Procedure found in the Employee Handbook and NTC volunteers should use the Complaints Procedure for Volunteers found in the Volunteers Handbook.

Forms bullying might take: NTC recognises that bullying can happen anywhere - at school, at home or online. It's usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally. Bullying that happens online, using social networks, games and mobile phones, is often called cyberbullying. A child can feel like there's no escape because it can happen wherever they are, at any time of day or night. **Bullying includes the following:**

- **Verbal abuse** - such as name calling and gossiping
- **Non-verbal abuse** - such as hand signs or text messages
- **Emotional abuse** - such as threatening, intimidating or humiliating someone
- **Exclusion** - such as ignoring or isolating someone
- **Undermining** - by constant criticism or spreading rumours
- **Controlling or manipulating** someone
- **Physical assaults** - such as hitting and pushing
- **Making silent, hoax or abusive calls**
- **Online or cyberbullying** - further details are provided below.

Defining online or cyberbullying: Cyberbullying is an increasingly common form of bullying behaviour which happens on social networks, games and mobile phones. Cyberbullying can include spreading rumours about someone, or posting nasty or embarrassing messages, images or videos. Children may know who's bullying them online - as it may just be an extension of offline peer bullying they are already experiencing - or they may be targeted by someone using a fake or anonymous account. It's easy to be anonymous online and this may increase the likelihood of an individual engaging in bullying behaviour. Because cyberbullying can happen at any time or anywhere - a child can be bullied when they are alone in their bedroom - it can feel like there is no escape. **Cyberbullying includes the following:**

- Sending threatening or abusive text messages
- Creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos
- Trolling - which is the sending of menacing/upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games
- Excluding children from online games, activities or friendship groups
- Setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child
- Encouraging young people to self-harm
- Voting for or against someone in an abusive poll
- Creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities - with the aim to embarrass a young person or cause trouble using their name
- Sending explicit messages - also known as sexting
- Pressuring children into sending sexual images or engaging in sexual conversations.

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Bullying (in whatever forms) can also be motivated by a discrimination towards the person being bullied. Further details of these types of bullying are provided below:

- **Racial bullying** - identified by the motivation of the bully, the language used, and/or by the fact that victims are singled out because of the colour of their skin, the way they talk, their ethnic grouping or by their religious or cultural practices
- **Special educational needs (SEN) & disability bullying** - this is where children are singled out because of a disability and which deaf children can be bullied more than other children with SEN's or disabilities
- **Sexual bullying** - behaviour, which whether physical or non-physical, is based on a person's sexuality or gender; and is when sexuality or gender is used as a weapon by boys or girls towards other boys or girls. Sexual bullying is more prevalent towards girls than boys
- **Homophobic/Bi-phobic bullying** - irrational dislike, hatred or fear of individuals that are, or are perceived to be lesbian, gay or bisexual
- **Transphobic bullying** - transphobic is an umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as - or does not sit comfortably with - the sex they were assigned at birth. Trans people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including (but not limited to) transgender, cross dresser, non-binary, gender queer.

Changes in behaviour which can indicate a child is being bullied or cyberbullied: It can be hard for adults, including parents, to know whether or not a child is being bullied. A child might not tell anyone because they're scared the bullying will get worse. They might think that they deserve to be bullied, or that it's their fault. **However, the following should be looked out for by NTC staff members and volunteers:**

- Belongings getting "lost" or damaged
- Physical injuries - such as unexplained bruises
- Being afraid to go to school, being mysteriously 'ill' each morning, or skipping school
- Not doing as well at school
- Asking for, or stealing, money - to give to a bully
- Being nervous, losing confidence, or becoming distressed and withdrawn
- Problems with eating or sleeping
- Bullying others.

Some of the above behaviour signs might also indicate abuse at the hands of adults - or other negative experiences - so they should be treated with caution.

What to do if you are being bullied: If you are being bullied you should never keep it to yourself. Tell someone you trust. This could be a staff member at NTC, a teacher, or someone else. It could also be your parent or carer. You may prefer to tell another child first and ask that person to help you tell an adult. If the bullying is happening at NTC - we will sort it out here. If it's happening somewhere else - maybe at school or near your home - NTC will get other people involved to stop it happening there.

Procedure to follow if an NTC staff member observes a child being bullied - or if someone discloses that they are being bullied:

- **If you are a child** and someone tells you that they are being bullied, don't try to deal with it yourself. Talk to the person about getting help from an adult. Try to persuade them to go with you to explain the situation to an NTC staff member or perhaps a teacher. If they won't do this, the best way to help is to explain that you will have to tell an adult yourself - and then go ahead and tell someone.
- **If you are an adult** and a child tells you that they are being bullied, take the child seriously. Do not tell them to stop being silly or to keep out of the way of the bullies. This will not help and will make the child feel let down and less inclined to tell anyone else. Listen to the child's full account of what is going on and complete the bullying reporting form with the child as soon as possible.

If you observe the bullying directly, act assertively to put a stop to it. Explain to all concerned that the incident will have to be reported properly to stop it happening again. Report the incident to NTC's DSO.

Unless the incident is minor and can be dealt with informally, the child's parent or carer should be informed by NTC's DSO within one working day. If possible, there should be a three-way meeting between the child, the NTC's DSO and the parent.

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If the bullying is taking place in another environment e.g. school, the NTC staff member should ask what support the parent and child would like, in order to engage with whoever the responsible agencies might be. The NTC staff member should aim to work in partnership with both parent and child and any other people who may be involved.

If the bullying is taking place within NTC, the parent and child should be reassured that it will be dealt with as a priority and they should be asked for their views on what would be helpful to deal with the situation.

The NTC staff member, having spoken to the child who has been bullied and the child's parent/carer, should also speak to the bully (or bullies) and obtain their account of what has happened or is happening. This should be noted in writing and the parents/carers of the bully (or bullies) should be informed. The bully and his or her parents/carers should be asked for their views on what should be done to put a stop to any further bullying and to repair the damage that has been done.

Apart from very minor incidents that have been directly observed by a staff member and dealt with at the time, all bullying that takes place at NTC should be discussed within the staff group within five working days.

At the meeting, the bullying incident should be discussed and the details of a draft plan drawn up to address the situation, taking into account any suggestions made by the children involved and their parents/carers. **The following areas should be covered:**

- a. Details of any apology that has been or should be offered by the bully (or bullies).
- b. Details of any support for the person who has been bullied e.g. use of buddy scheme, extra input from the key worker and/or referral to another service.
- c. Details of any consequences for the bully, in addition to making an apology, with reference to the behaviour code.
- d. Details of any support for the bully, with reference to the behaviour code.
- e. Details of any further discussions or work to be done with others in the group, including children who may have observed or encouraged the bullying.
- f. Details of any changes in how the staff group may handle issues of bullying in future.

The plan should be shared with the children concerned and their parents - and should be reviewed regularly.

Keeping a record of the bullying: Use the **Bullying Report Form** (available from NTC's DSO) to make clear notes of any discussions or meetings that take place following the bullying incident. The plan for dealing with the aftermath of the incident should be copied to the child who has been bullied and their parent/carer and to the bullies and their parents/carers. It should also be placed on the file of all the children directly involved.

Reviewed & Updated: March 2018

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